

Avifauna of the Hwimo area, Nigeria

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L'auteur rapporte les résultats de ses recensements d'oiseaux, effectués sur une période de 21 mois dans les environs de Hwimo, état du Niger, Nigéria. La région est située dans le domaine soudanien et est constituée d'un mosaïque de savanne arbustive et de terres cultivées, comprenant plusieurs mares et cours d'eau saisonniers ainsi qu'un inselberg. Une méthode standardisée simple a été utilisée, constituée du comptage de la totalité des oiseaux vus et entendus pendant une durée de cinq minutes à des points fixes le long d'un transect. Au total, 21.668 oiseaux de 162 espèces ont été notés. Des données sont fournies sur la distribution géographique et saisonnière de certaines espèces et comparées à celles d'Elgood². Le Cossyphé à calotte blanche *Cossypha albicapilla*, l'Anomalospize parasite *Anomalospiza imberbis* et la Veuve nigérienne *Vidua interjectan* avaient pas précédemment été observés aussi loin au nord-ouest. Certaines espèces, telles que l'Élanion blanc *Elanus caeruleus*, le Piapiac africain *Ptilostomus afer* et certains choucadors présentent des fluctuations d'abondance saisonnière non rapportées par Elgood². Le Milan noir *Milvus migrans* était absent en juillet et août, tandis que le Faucon lanier *Falco biarmicus* et la Cisticole rousse *Cisticola rufus* étaient présents en nombres réduits pendant cette période. L'Outarde à ventre noir *Eupodotis melanogaster* est toujours présente dans la région. Des recherches supplémentaires couvrant un territoire plus vaste sont recommandées afin d'obtenir des données plus détaillées sur les migrations locales éventuelles de certaines espèces.

Introduction

In February 1998, I was posted as a Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) volunteer to a rural Primary Health Care centre in the small village of Hwimo in Mariga Local Government, Niger state, north-west Nigeria (10°41'N 05°24'E; see Fig 1). It has an estimated 600–900 inhabitants. The predominant occupation is farming.

There are few currently active ornithologists in Nigeria. Elgood² points out that little research has been undertaken around Hwimo. Therefore, I decided to monitor the region's avifauna, given that I was to be based there for two years. Regular surveys were commenced in June 1998. Here, I present a summary of the 47 surveys I performed over a 21-

month period. Nomenclature follows *Birds of Africa*, eg Fry *et al*. Names of trees are taken from Maydell⁶.

Habitat

Hwimo is situated in the northern, mainly broadleaf, Guinea Savanna region. Topsoils are largely laterite, clay and sand, and most areas around the village are very rocky. The region is a mosaic of bush (areas with trees, bushes and/or grasses) and farmland (the latter occupying $\pm 30\%$). The main crops are Guinea corn, millet, maize, rice, groundnut, bambaranut and soybean (recent). Planted fruit trees are mainly mango and cashew. Some areas of farmland are not used annually and become overgrown with grasses and occasionally bushes. There is only a small remnant of gallery forest. Tree diversity in the area is quite high. Large trees are mainly shea butter *Butyrospermum parkii*, locust bean *Parkia biglobosa* and tamarind *Tamarindus indica*, with some baobab *Adansonia digitata* and palm trees. Most are fire tolerant.

Some temporary small streams have running water in the rainy season, when several ponds that attract birds such as Green Heron *Butorides striatus* also form. Within the immediate area of the village there are several inselbergs (rounded bare granite hills), which support a number of species of fruiting trees such as fig *Ficus* spp. Valleys and other areas where sediment accumulates are overgrown by grasses and bushes.

Climate

The climate is typical of the northern Guinea zone. In 1998 the first rains were in mid-March and in 1999 in April. In April–May there was only one shower per week. Both years also witnessed a dry spell in June of nearly three



Figure 1. Map of Nigeria showing the position of Hwimo in the country.

weeks. In July the main rainy season commenced, and continued until September. Rainfall declined dramatically in October and the last rain fell in November. According to local people, both years were unusually wet. Temperatures were very high (above 40°C) in March–June, but then fell, with the lowest temperatures in late July–August (c25–30°C). Late in the rainy season (September) temperatures rose to 35°C, until the start of the Harmattan. Temperatures then declined again (c20–30°C) until around March.

Threats to wildlife in the area

Due to the increasing human population, new areas of land are being claimed for building and farming. Many large trees are felled to make way for agriculture and timber for building. Smaller trees are regularly cut for firewood and bushes cleared to make way for farming. Fires are regularly started in the area. Hunting is still widespread in the region. Many farmers carry homemade guns and children catapults. Some mammals persist, but I observed very few. Hunters were encountered returning with porcupine and duiker, but reported that mammals have become obviously scarcer in recent years. One hunter related that c40 years previously there were still hyena directly around Hwimo.

Methods

Soon after arriving in Hwimo I started familiarising myself with the local avifauna, using a tape-recorder to help learn and identify vocalisations. Some were familiar to me from previous visits to West Africa. Literature used for identification and other purposes consisted of Barlow *et al.*¹, Elgood², Mackworth-Praed & Grant⁵, van Perlo⁷ and Serle *et al.*⁸. I also used Gibbon¹ to compare my own recordings of songs/calls.

I developed a simple survey based on a method used in The Netherlands by SOVON. A transect through the surrounding region was chosen along which I selected 15 points, rather than the 20 points used by SOVON. The number of survey points was reduced because of the rapid decline in bird activity during the morning. All birds seen and heard during a five-minute at each point were recorded. Precisely the same route was performed once every three weeks. The largest gap between surveys, in July 1999, was caused by illness. Table 1 lists all survey dates and times.

The method is standardised and permits comparison of the results across different counts. By conducting surveys every three weeks a temporal distribution pattern through the year could be ascertained. However, this method does not take account of the differences in the detectability of various species. Apparent absences, eg three of the four *Cisticola* spp, which are much less easily and reliably detected when not vocalising, and several *Ploceus*, *Euplectes* and *Vidua*, which are difficult to identify in their non-breeding plumages, can be explained by such factors that influence detectability. I attempted to commence and complete each survey at a similar time. Species that could not be immediately identified, I attempted to resolve directly following the relevant point count. Earlier in the survey period, I also used the period between point counts to make sound recordings, which explains the late completion of some surveys.

In June 1998 I developed an initial transect, which commenced at the house and traversed the nearest inselberg before returning around this hill to the house. This usually took 3 hrs 15 mins. Points 1–4 were mainly farmland, points 5–9 were on the inselberg and points 10–15 were in bush near the inselberg. Temporary ponds were located near points 2–3 and there was a small seasonal stream near point 12. The transect was surveyed on 27 occasions.

Following the rainy season I designed a second transect, which took me further from the inselberg. This was surveyed from December 1998 onwards and usually took 3 hrs 32 mins to complete. Points 1, 8–10, 13 and 15 were mainly farmland, points 2–5, 7 and 11 were mainly in bush, point 6 was in a small gallery forest and points 12 and 14 were in an area of mature broadleaf trees. No seasonal ponds were located on this transect, but near points 4, 6 and 15 there was a seasonal stream. The transect was surveyed on 20 occasions.

Table 1. Dates and times of surveys

Route 1			Route 2		
Survey	Date	Time	Survey	Date	Time
1	7 Jun 98	07.25–10.55	1	28 Dec 98	07.48–11.42
2	27 Jun 98	06.00–10.18	2	16 Jan 99	07.45–11.03
3	12 Jul 98	07.35–12.14	3	14 Feb 99	07.14–10.45
4	10 Aug 98	09.00–12.02	4	6 Mar 99	07.13–10.50
5	30 Aug 98	08.43–11.35	5	27 Mar 99	06.50–10.22
6	19 Sep 98	07.25–11.55	6	10 Apr 99	06.50–10.32
7	10 Oct 98	07.10–10.26	7	2 May 99	06.47–09.50
8	25 Oct 98	07.01–10.50	8	23 May 99	06.46–10.07
9	14 Nov 98	07.16–10.15	9	5 Jun 99	06.50–10.18
10	05 Dec 98	07.22–10.21	10	27 Jun 99	07.27–11.05
11	25 Dec 98	06.55–10.10	11	7 Aug 99	07.10–11.02
12	10 Jan 99	07.34–10.45	12	28 Aug 99	07.01–10.23
13	7 Feb 99	08.33–10.35	13	18 Sep 99	06.58–11.12
14	7 Mar 99	06.55–10.20	14	10 Oct 99	06.52–11.15
15	28 Mar 99	06.45–09.37	15	23 Oct 99	06.42–10.23
16	17 Apr 99	06.53–09.44	16	13 Nov 99	06.32–09.53
17	15 May 99	06.40–09.28	17	11 Dec 99	07.08–10.06
18	13 Jun 99	07.01–09.32	18	25 Dec 99	06.47–10.16
19	24 Jul 99	07.39–11.15	19	15 Jan 00	07.11–10.08
20	14 Aug 99	06.58–10.19	20	6 Feb 00	06.58–10.12
21	11 Sep 99	07.05–10.43			
22	9 Oct 99	06.43–10.13			
23	24 Oct 99	06.40–09.58			
24	14 Nov 99	06.32–09.45			
25	12 Dec 99	07.00–09.48			
26	2 Jan 00	07.05–09.50			
27	30 Jan 00	07.13–09.47			

Table 2. Number of counts and number of birds per species per month

English and scientific names	Month (number of counts)												Total (47)
	Jan (5)	Feb (3)	Mar (4)	Apr (2)	May (3)	Jun (5)	Jul (2)	Aug (5)	Sep (3)	Oct (6)	Nov (3)	Dec (6)	
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	179	24	30	30	34	59	23	62	85	142	114	164	946
Green Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	7	0	0	13
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Black-headed Heron <i>A. melanocephala</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
African Cuckoo Falcon <i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	9
Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black-shouldered Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	10
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>	6	1	3	4	1	4	0	0	1	43	5	6	74
Hooded Vulture <i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	11
African Harrier Hawk <i>Polyboroides typus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	5
Pallid Harrier <i>Circus macrourus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Montagu's Harrier <i>C. pygargus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Marsh Harrier <i>C. aeruginosus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5
harrier sp <i>C. macrourus/pygargus</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gabar Goshawk <i>Micronisus gabar</i>	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	3	10
Dark Chanting Goshawk <i>Melierax metabates</i>	0	2	2	1	0	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	12
Shikra <i>Accipiter badius</i>	14	5	16	3	7	7	2	4	2	6	2	9	77
Grasshopper Buzzard <i>Butastur rufipennis</i>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Lizard Buzzard <i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>	1	3	7	2	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	3	23
Red-necked Buzzard <i>Buteo auguralis</i>	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	13
Tawny Eagle <i>Aquila rapax</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	10
Fox Kestrel <i>F. alopec</i>	6	1	5	2	5	8	3	5	1	10	2	10	58
Grey Kestrel <i>F. ardosiaceus</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
Lanner Falcon <i>F. biarmicus</i>	5	3	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	6	3	24
Helmeted Guineafowl <i>Numida meleagris</i>	0	5	4	4	0	10	2	2	0	1	0	0	28
Stone Partridge <i>Ptilopachus petrosus</i>	72	16	72	34	32	66	29	71	35	104	45	66	642
White-throated Francolin <i>Francolinus albogularis</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	5	0	0	1	9
Double-spurred Francolin <i>F. bicaratus</i>	2	0	17	0	1	3	2	6	2	8	5	0	46
African Crane <i>Crex egregia</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Black-bellied Bustard <i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	7
Bruce's Green Pigeon <i>Treron waalia</i>	0	4	2	1	1	2	3	16	4	3	0	0	36
Black-billed Wood Dove <i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>	68	22	60	34	54	89	20	107	72	100	47	95	768
Namaqua Dove <i>Oena capensis</i>	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Speckled Pigeon <i>Columba guinea</i>	5	13	12	4	1	1	1	8	8	8	2	8	71
Red-eyed Dove <i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	4	0	0	0	0	7	5	4	7	6	3	3	39
Vinaceous Dove <i>S. vinacea</i>	346	274	294	179	144	247	95	257	219	390	181	389	3,015
Laughing Dove <i>S. senegalensis</i>	90	69	94	38	29	81	29	66	50	91	41	100	778
Senegal Parrot <i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>	11	12	15	7	17	23	10	23	12	31	4	19	184
Rose-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	6
Violet Turaco <i>Musophaga violacea</i>	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	3	6	0	0	18
Western Grey Plantain-eater <i>Crinifer piscator</i>	34	11	23	8	13	17	3	18	13	13	10	15	178
African Striped Cuckoo <i>Oxylophus levillantii</i>	0	0	0	0	5	16	3	13	2	4	3	0	46
African Cuckoo <i>Cuculus gularis</i>	0	0	11	4	9	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	39
Klaas's Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	4	2	1	0	0	14
Didric Cuckoo <i>C. caprius</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Senegal Coucal <i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	12	15	10	13	19	39	18	34	16	39	13	27	255
Spotted Eagle-Owl <i>Bubo africanus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Pearl-spotted Owllet <i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	7	4	9	2	3	2	0	0	0	5	1	3	36
Mottled Spinetail <i>Telacanthura ussheri</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
African Palm Swift <i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	5	0	8	2	4	1	2	0	5	11	0	2	40
Pallid Swift <i>Apus pallidus</i>	0	0	0	0	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	13
Common Swift <i>A. apus</i>	0	0	0	0	85	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	90
White-rumped Swift <i>A. caffer</i>	0	0	1	2	3	22	5	9	6	6	3	4	61
Little Swift <i>A. affinis</i>	0	0	14	15	19	22	9	16	7	51	0	160	313
African Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ceyx picta</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
White-throated Bee-eater <i>Merops albicollis</i>	1	0	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	21	46	0	101
Carmine Bee-eater <i>M. nubicus</i>	8	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14
Rufous-crowned Roller <i>Coracias naevia</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Abyssinian Roller <i>C. abyssinica</i>	5	9	8	11	10	4	1	0	1	5	2	11	67
Broad-billed Roller <i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Green Wood-Hoopoe <i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	26	25	14	31	32	9	7	8	22	28	15	43	260
Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Red-billed Hornbill <i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	38	16	35	28	39	52	16	43	32	40	16	32	387

African Grey Hornbill <i>T. nasutus</i>	44	34	38	24	15	29	0	6	11	33	22	64	320
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird <i>Pogonius chrysoconus</i>	77	43	67	32	49	71	24	45	26	47	31	98	610
Viellot's Barbet <i>Lybius vielloti</i>	4	9	8	8	0	2	0	0	4	6	0	6	47
Bearded Barbet <i>L. dubius</i>	10	2	14	7	4	7	4	13	11	11	5	7	95
Greater Honeyguide <i>Indicator indicator</i>	2	2	5	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	17
Lesser Honeyguide <i>I. minor</i>	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	5
Fine-spotted Woodpecker <i>Campethera punctuligera</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Grey Woodpecker <i>Dendropicos goertae</i>	5	9	8	4	6	11	1	4	2	11	2	3	66
Brown-backed Woodpecker <i>Picoides obsoletus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Flappet Lark <i>Mirafra rufocinnamomea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sun Lark <i>Galerida modesta</i>	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	4	0	0	1	2	12
Mosque Swallow <i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Lesser Striped Swallow <i>H. abyssinica</i>	0	0	10	2	6	7	2	5	0	9	0	0	41
Preuss's Cliff Swallow <i>H. preussi</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Rock Martin <i>H. fulgula</i>	9	5	8	6	0	11	4	7	6	12	5	6	79
Pied-winged Swallow <i>H. leucosoma</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ethiopian Swallow <i>H. aethiopia</i>	66	0	4	3	1	2	8	30	100	30	36	281	
Barn Swallow <i>H. rustica</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Common House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	15	74	111
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4
Red-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike <i>Campophaga phoenicea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	6
Common Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	125	80	184	84	77	143	44	95	50	122	61	150	1,215
Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat <i>Cosyssa niveicapilla</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	3	0	0	9
White-crowned Robin-Chat <i>C. albicapilla</i>	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	0	11
Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Familiar Chat <i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	8	2	7	4	1	5	1	1	1	2	2	0	34
Mocking Cliff-Chat <i>Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris</i>	44	13	43	33	21	46	25	39	27	33	17	31	372
African Thrush <i>Turdus pelios</i>	0	0	3	10	15	32	10	14	4	1	0	0	89
Melodious Warbler <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Olivaceous Warbler <i>H. pallida</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Singing Cisticola <i>Cisticola cantans</i>	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	3	2	17	0	1	29
Rock-loving Cisticola <i>C. aberrans</i>	14	4	17	12	10	35	17	26	15	29	12	11	202
Rufous Cisticola <i>C. rufus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	4	6	16	14	15	0	1	57
Fan-tailed Cisticola <i>C. juncidis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	0	6
Tawny-flanked Prinia <i>Prinia subflava</i>	20	15	24	13	32	64	23	53	20	41	7	37	349
Bleating Warbler <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	18	12	15	12	12	42	24	44	30	40	9	14	272
Senegal Eremomela <i>Eremomela pusilla</i>	31	32	25	24	14	25	2	20	0	19	20	30	242
Northern Crombec <i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>	4	1	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	20
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	7
Northern Black Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	3	0	2	2	2	15
Pale Flycatcher <i>M. pallidus</i>	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	5	17
African Paradise-Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	6	2	6	1	0	26
Senegal Batis <i>Batis senegalensis</i>	5	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	14
Brown Babbler <i>Turdoides plebejus</i>	71	61	50	29	51	31	21	24	34	36	0	85	493
Blackcap Babbler <i>T. reinwardtii</i>	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	10
Yellow Penduline Tit <i>Anthoscopus parvulus</i>	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8
Pygmy Sunbird <i>Hedydipna platyura</i>	26	19	10	8	2	0	0	0	0	4	13	34	116
Scarlet-chested Sunbird <i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>	25	22	61	43	54	80	28	98	49	51	11	72	594
Yellow White-eye <i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Yellow-billed Shrike <i>Corvinella corvina</i>	74	64	77	34	82	91	25	77	21	51	30	60	686
Grey-headed Bush-Shrike <i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>	4	4	2	5	2	2	0	0	0	11	1	0	31
Black-crowned Tchagra <i>Tchagra senegala</i>	2	0	5	6	8	4	2	5	1	14	0	1	48
Northern Puffback <i>Dryocopus gambensis</i>	9	4	6	6	9	3	4	0	1	7	0	8	57
Yellow-crowned Gonolek <i>Laniarius barbarus</i>	14	6	11	14	11	18	4	12	3	23	8	16	140
Brubru <i>Nilaus afer</i>	7	5	6	3	6	7	0	1	0	3	1	2	41
White Helmet-Shrike <i>Prionops plumatus</i>	19	24	15	14	16	16	9	3	8	14	0	15	153
African Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus auratus</i>	11	23	40	19	33	21	14	16	10	24	8	23	242
Fork-tailed Drongo <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	22	17	18	16	16	13	2	20	5	11	10	40	190
Pied Crow <i>Corvus albus</i>	17	5	4	1	0	2	0	1	0	8	2	5	45
Piapiac <i>Ptilostomus afer</i>	39	19	14	23	9	16	15	3	0	0	32	16	186
Red-winged Starling <i>Onychognathus morio</i>	7	2	10	31	0	20	5	22	0	8	1	9	115
Purple Glossy Starling <i>Lamprolaima purpureus</i>	16	16	12	3	40	189	108	73	49	186	58	54	804
Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling <i>L. chalcurus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	6	1	0	0	17
Greater Blue-eared Starling <i>L. chalybaeus</i>	0	0	1	0	0	26	2	15	2	0	0	0	46
Lesser Blue-eared Starling <i>L. chloropterus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	163	128	103	38	253	47	0	732
Long-tailed Glossy Starling <i>L. caudatus</i>	16	7	10	5	23	45	10	31	9	32	5	28	221
Violet-backed Starling <i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	0	0	17	15	22	29	2	3	0	0	0	0	88
Grey-headed Sparrow <i>Passer griseus</i>	9	1	7	1	3	7	4	20	3	18	13	12	98
Bush Petronia <i>Petronia dentata</i>	228	116	72	26	17	19	0	17	51	137	65	177	925
White-billed Buffalo-Weaver <i>Bubalornis albirostris</i>	77	0	0	22	0	29	25	10	25	10	0	2	200
Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver <i>Plocepasser superciliosus</i>	6	7	12	1	8	8	5	2	4	8	0	10	71

Little Weaver <i>Ploceus luteolus</i>	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
African Masked Weaver <i>P. velatus</i>	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	9	6	4	0	0	25
Heuglin's Masked Weaver <i>P. heuglini</i>	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	1	0	1	1	0	11
Village Weaver <i>P. cucullatus</i>	0	0	0	0	6	6	10	14	0	0	0	0	36
Red-headed Weaver <i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	3	2	6	5	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	8	31
Black-winged Bishop <i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	9	17	28	23	0	0	78
Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	14	31	0	20	89
Parasitic Weaver <i>Anomalospiza imberbis</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Red-winged Pytilia <i>Pytilia phoenicoptera</i>	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Red-billed Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta senegalae</i>	7	7	0	0	0	0	1	12	0	1	2	10	40
Black-faced Firefinch <i>L. larvata</i>	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Lavender Waxbill <i>Estrilda caerulescens</i>	25	9	27	3	22	11	3	2	1	11	4	0	118
Orange-cheeked Waxbill <i>E. melpoda</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Black-rumped Waxbill <i>E. troglodytes</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	13	1	2	0	4	27
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu <i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>	38	30	18	21	32	36	6	39	22	53	9	20	324
African Quailfinch <i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Bronze Mannikin <i>Lonchura cucullata</i>	1	10	2	3	0	23	13	33	6	29	0	3	123
Village Indigobird <i>Vidua chalybeata</i>	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	10	14
Pin-tailed Whydah <i>V. macroura</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	6
Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah <i>V. interjecta</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Yellow-fronted Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>	23	17	22	29	42	64	13	43	17	42	11	18	341
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>	62	22	18	11	2	8	1	3	23	129	46	69	394
Brown-rumped Bunting <i>E. affinis</i>	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	7
Cabanis's Bunting <i>E. cabanisi</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total number of individuals													21,668

Both transects can be viewed as an extension of the other. For example, point 15 on route 1 is located on the same track as points 1–2 of route 2. It would have been possible to develop a transect comprising half of each route. It was only after commencing surveys on the first transect that I discovered the existence of the stream with its small gallery forest along with an interesting mix of bush and fields that formed the basis of the second transect.

Results

In the absence of other literature, I used Elgood² as a reference in which to set my observations into context, although very little previous ornithological work has focused on this part of Nigeria. For instance, Kontagora, the nearest reasonable-sized town to Hwimo, is only rarely mentioned by Elgood².

Given the existence of some different habitats on the two transects it was comparatively unsurprising that several species were only recorded on one and not the other route. The presence of the inselberg on the first transect and gallery forest and greater numbers of tall trees on the second transect presumably account for most of the differences in species recorded on the two routes.

The total species list from the surveys, including the sum of individuals recorded per month is presented in Table 2. The number of species recorded during the survey was 162, which is 85% of the total I found in the area (191 species). In total I counted 21,668 individuals (nearly 31 per point). Ten species (of which three are doves, Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*, Laughing Dove *S. senegalensis* and Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*) account for 48.5% of all birds (10,511 individuals). The most abundant

was *Streptopelia vinacea* (3,015, or 4.3 individuals per point). All are very vocal or very obvious species.

Many species exhibit a clear temporal distribution pattern. Some are wet-season visitors (eg African Crake *Crex egregia* and several species of cuckoo) and others are dry-season visitors (eg Bush Petronia *Petronia dentata* and Pygmy Sunbird *Hedydipna platura*), while some are only passage migrants (eg Common Swift *Apus apus* and White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*). Ten Western Palearctic breeders were recorded (Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, Common Swift, Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*, Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, Common House Martin *Delichon urbica*, Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*, Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, Melo-



Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* by Mark Andrews

dious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* and Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*).

Several species have not previously been mentioned from as far north-west within Nigeria as Hwimo²: White-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha albicapilla* was found in seven months, Parasitic Weaver *Anomalospiza imberbis* in January and June, and Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah *Vidua interjecta* in August and October.

Three species exhibit an unexplained seasonal pattern: Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer* and Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus*. Due to the relatively small size of the study area it is impossible to know if these species perform migrations, but it is plausible that all three move only within a broader area around Hwimo while foraging. Glossy starlings (*Lamprotornis* spp) were very numerous during some periods at fig trees and other fruiting trees. Elgood² considered that there was no evidence for seasonal movements for any of these three species. A survey of the broader area around Hwimo might produce some novel ideas concerning this subject.

Two species might have been expected to occur throughout the year according to Elgood², but I failed to record Black Kite *Milvus migrans* in July–August, and during the wet season (April–August) I recorded just one Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*. Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes bordeaceus* and Red Bishop *E. orix* were, as expected, principally recorded in the wet season, but both were also noted in the dry season, when they are more localised within a smaller area, and were not seen in all months. Rufous Cisticola *Cisticola rufus* was recorded in several months year-round, but during the dry season it was easily overlooked due to the cessation of vocal activity. It appears to be reasonably common around Hwimo. Identification was

confirmed by Claude Chappuis, who reported (*in litt* 2001) that my recordings closely resemble those he has made in Nigeria around Kaduna.

Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster* still occurs in the area. Elgood² mentions that most large birds are declining in Nigeria because of habitat loss and hunting. Many people carry local-made guns around Hwimo, which is growing in size as bush is cleared to make way for agriculture, but the species can still be observed in small numbers.

Conclusions

One hundred and sixty-two species were recorded during the survey. While the nature of the project does not provide a fully representative view of the avifauna around Hwimo, it does offer a reasonably comprehensive overview of those species occurring in the area. Further research of a broader area might provide more in-depth information concerning the possible (local) migrations of several species.

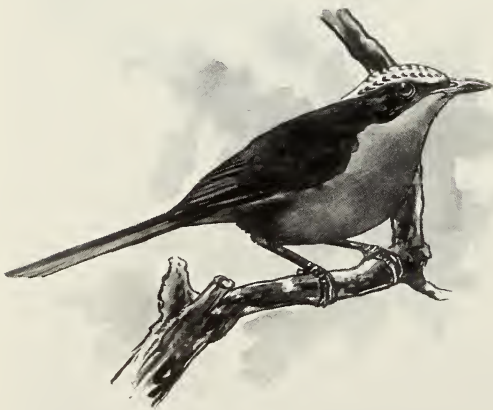
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White-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha albicapilla*
by Mark Andrews